

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Applicant respectfully requests that all previous versions of the claims be replaced with the following listing:

1. (Cancelled).
2. (Currently Amended) A [[The]] non-contact carrying device ~~according to claim 1, for holding and carrying a carried object in a non-contact state, the device comprising:~~

a carrying head having a tip surface including a gas supplying surface in which an opening of a gas supplying hole is formed defining an axis, an annular holding surface lying radially outward of the gas supplying surface and offset from the gas supplying hole along the axis, and a gas guiding surface smoothly connecting the gas supplying surface with the annular holding surface;

a nozzle provided with a base portion mounted on the carrying head and a disk portion facing to the gas supplying surface and forming an annular slit for discharging gas between the gas supplying surface and the disk portion; and

a nozzle-moving member changing width of the slit by moving the nozzle in an axial direction with respect to the carrying head,

wherein the nozzle-moving member is a screw member mounted on the nozzle and screwed to the carrying head, and the carrying head is provided with an elastic member for applying an elastic force to the nozzle in a direction of enlarging the width of the slit.

3. (Currently Amended) A [[The]] non-contact carrying device ~~according to~~
~~claim 1, for holding and carrying a carried object in a non-contact state, the~~
~~device comprising:~~

a carrying head having a tip surface including a gas supplying surface
in which an opening of a gas supplying hole is formed defining an axis, an
annular holding surface located radially outward from the gas supplying
surface and offset from the gas supplying hole along the axis, and a gas
guiding surface smoothly connecting the gas supplying surface with the
annular holding surface;

a nozzle provided with a base portion mounted on the carrying
head and a disk portion facing to the gas supplying surface and forming
an annular slit for discharging gas between the gas supplying surface and
the disk portion;

a nozzle-moving member opening and closing the slit by moving
the nozzle in an axial direction with respect to the carrying head; and

~~wherein~~ a sealing member [[is]] mounted on an outer
circumferential portion of the disk portion so as to face to the gas
supplying surface and ~~prevents~~ prevent a foreign matter from intruding
into the gas supplying hole when the slit is closed.